

THE PIPELINE

Monthly Newsletter

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Pipeline, an Award-Winning Publication

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Mission Statement

Our mission is to protect the public health, safety, and the environment by providing quality service, environmental stewardship and renewable resources.

RWRD Receives Federal Stimulus Funding

by Lorraine Simon

The Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (PCRWRD) is among the first water sector agencies in the State of Arizona to obtain stimulus funding from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

The Water Infrastructure Finance Authority (WIFA) is administering stimulus funds for water sector projects in the State of Arizona. In addition to the \$2 million in principal forgiveness funds (monies that do not have to be repaid) from ARRA, WIFA has also granted RWRD \$8 million dollars in a low interest loan. Both sources of funding have been allocated to the Regional Optimization Master Plan (ROMP) Plant Interconnect Project and will save Pima County residents nearly \$3.4 million in financing costs over the term of the loan.

WIFA is an independent agency of the State of Arizona that is authorized to offer below market interest rate loans to finance the construction, rehabilitation, and improvement of drinking water,

wastewater, wastewater reclamation, and other water quality projects.

The Plant Interconnect Project will result in the construction of a large sewer interceptor that will convey flows from the Roger Road Wastewater Reclamation Facility (WRF) service area in a five-mile long gravity sewer line to the Ina Road WRF. It is the first project in the state-mandated ROMP to go under construction. The ROMP is a program adopted by PCRWRD to meet environmental regulatory requirements for reducing nitrogen and ammonia levels in effluent discharges to the Santa Cruz River from the Roger Road and Ina Road Wastewater Reclamation Facilities.

The purpose of the ARRA is to preserve and maintain jobs, stimulate economic recovery, and provide public infrastructure investments. President Obama signed the legislation authorizing the ARRA on February 17. To qualify for ARRA, stimulus funding, projects had to be "shovel ready" within

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Pictured L to R: John Warner, James Doyle, Mike Kostrewski, Eric Wieduwilt, Jackson Jenkins, Supervisor Sharon Bronson, County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry, RWRD Director Mike Gritzuk, Deputy County Administrator John Bernal

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120 days from the February 17, 2009 signing. Construction on the project began on June 1. The anticipated completion date is December 2010.

It is estimated that approximately 255 – 300 local (private sector) jobs will be created from the construction of the Plant Interconnect Project.

A news conference was held on Tuesday, May 26, on the grounds of the Ina Road WRF. During the conference, Supervisor Sharon Bronson (District 3), County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry, Deputy County Administrator John Bernal, and PCRWRD staff participated in a groundbreaking ceremony.

The RWRD Project Team that coordinated the ground breaking site includes Jaime Rivera, Project Manager; Dave Kay, Assistant Project Manager; and Mike Kostrzewski, Senior Project Manager.



Correction:

There are a number of corrections to last month's story entitled *Construction Project Avoided*. First, the Conveyance Division has reported that Jason Joaquin also participated in the cleaning efforts of the centrate line. Jason's photo is pictured to the left.

Second, it was reported that five manholes had been installed to assist in future maintenance of the line. No manholes were constructed; instead five cleanouts were installed.

Finally, printed below is a very important part of the story that needs to be told. We are featuring it as Part 2 of the *Construction Project Avoided* story.

Construction Project Avoided – Part 2 by Laura Hagen Fairbanks

There was more to last month's story *Construction Project Avoided* than was reported in the May edition of the *Pipeline*. While it is true that the Conveyance Division did an excellent job of cleaning 3,000 feet of the centrate line at the Ina Road WRF, a great deal of planning and preparation took place prior to the Conveyance staff's efforts. In addition to the planning and preparation required for the project, Plant Services Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager, Jack Van Riper implemented the project in the face of significant doubt on the part of some Treatment Division employees. Many whom Jack spoke to about the project believed that efforts to clear the pipe would be a waste of time and money.

In contrast to the prevailing beliefs, Van Riper and Albert Garcia, Operation's Supervisor, did not believe the pipe was filled with struvite. Had the pipe been filled entirely with struvite – a cement-like material – it would not have been possible to clear it. Jack and Albert endured significant skepticism as they moved forward with the planning of this project.

Albert explained that retired RWRD employee, Helen Rhudy also had believed the line could be cleared. However, she encountered the same doubt and skepticism and did not pursue the project. When Jack was promoted to Helen's position, he was determined to see the project through. "We had to verify just what was blocking that line and we were not going to let anyone talk us out of determining the cause of the problem. Albert was one of the few people who agreed with me. When we were ready to move forward with this, I advised Jackson Jenkins, Deputy Director, Treatment Division, and he told us to proceed."

According to Jack, once the 8-inch centrate pipe was cut open it was apparent that there was some struvite in the line, but only



L-R: Albert García, Jack Van Riper, Patrick Paddock

a very thin layer. Most of the material clogging the pipe was a combination of hair, mud and sediment.

Jack noted that the project would not have been successful without the efforts to generate the Job Order Contract for the placement of cleanouts. Jack also said the efforts of Project Manager Patrick Paddock, Senior Civil Engineering Assistant, Engineering Division, combined with the efforts of Albert Garcia were invaluable in the success of the project. They were there throughout the planning and preparation stages. They were also there while the Conveyance Division staff performed the actual cleaning.

As was reported in last month's story, it is true that the work performed by Conveyance Division staff helped the department save \$5 million dollars in construction costs. However, Jack's persistence in arranging these efforts was paramount. "At first the Conveyance Division staff seemed reluctant to do the line cleaning,

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but after I spoke with John Warner (Deputy Director, Conveyance Division), John wholeheartedly agreed to their participation. I really appreciated Jackson and John's support." said Jack.

With reluctance on so many fronts, Jack, Albert and Patrick put forth an extraordinary effort to make this project happen. Without their perseverance and resolute determination, the \$5 million dollar savings would never have been realized.

As radio personality Paul Harvey concludes each of his broadcasts: "And now you know the rest of the story."

Department Dialogue Meetings

by Lorraine Simon

The first round of this year's Department Dialogue meetings are now complete. The meetings began on May 4 and concluded on May 29. Director Mike Gritzuk and members of the Executive Team travelled to a variety of RWRD sites to conduct presentations to department staff on the progress the department has made in the past six months.

The department is moving forward on many fronts. Topics covered in the presentation included the status on the Regional Optimization Master Plan (ROMP), Planning and Engineering Division, Department Financial Issues, Conveyance Division, Treatment Division, Compliance and Regulatory Affairs Office, Security Update, Continuity of Operations Planning, and E-RAP.

The meetings were very informative and well-attended by RWRD employees. Department employees raised questions on job security; especially in regard to recent discussions on consolidation of services among county departments. Staff also raised concerns about job security, pay, and benefits when the Design, Build, Operate (DBO) firm takes over the day-to-day operations at the

new Water Reclamation Campus treatment facility that will replace the Roger Road Wastewater Reclamation Facility (WRF). RWRD employees had questions on the different ROMP components (Ina Road Expansion and Upgrade, Water Reclamation Campus, and Plant Interconnect Project), the department budget, Multi-Skill Based Pilot Program at the Ina Road WRF, and security at the outlying facility locations.

Kudos to members of the Executive Team (Mike Gritzuk, Jackson Jenkins, Jeff Nichols, John Warner, and Eric Wieduwilt) as well as Laura Fairbanks, Shaun Pfund, Jeff Prevatt, and Jean Voelkel for their informative presentations. Many thanks to Jan McDonald and Stephanie Siva for creating the PowerPoint slides for the Department Dialogue presentations. That PowerPoint is available at "http://intranet.wwm.pima.gov/reports/ppt_shows.htm" for staff that missed the meetings.

The next round of Department Dialogues meetings will be held later this year.

RWRD Summer Intern Heads Off to College with Full Scholarship

by Laura Hagen Fairbanks



Andres Cano, City High School Graduate
Son of Patsy (Ronquillo) Cota

Graduations bear many commonalities: strains of Pomp and Circumstance fill the air, graduates bear caps and gowns, speeches challenge graduates to grasp new opportunities, proud parents shed tears, and cheers rise from those in attendance when the names of their loved ones are read.

However, the actual graduates can vary

in multiple ways. High school graduations often find parents breathing sighs of relief while their teenagers plan their "escapes"

from the watchful eyes of their mothers and fathers. Teenagers graduating from high school can be serious or carefree. College graduates can be young, middle aged or old. Older "non-traditional" students are often realizing a dream that was deferred in their youth or possibly never even considered during those times when other dreams and plans pulled them in different directions.

This series of two articles will tell the stories of two recent graduates with ties to RWRD.

The first graduate and the focus of this month's story is Andres Cano. Andres is the son of RWRD employee Patsy (Ronquillo) Cota. Andres worked in the Community Relations Office in Pima County's Summer Youth Program in 2006 and 2007. He was an uncommon summer youth worker. He did not come to Community Relations needing to learn about appropriate workplace behaviors and expectations. He did not need to learn about proper dress, or the correct way to answer the phone or speak to members of the public. From his first day on the job, Andres performed the work of a Community Relations professional. He researched and wrote

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documents for the director's signature, he drafted brochures, and he provided input on a variety of projects. Surprisingly, he was one of RWRD's younger summer students, performing these duties when he was only 14 and 15 years old.

As summer 2008 approached, Andres called me and asked me about the possibility of doing "something different this summer." He thought he might like to work for one of the elected officials. Knowing that Andres was interested in becoming a journalist, I told him I would speak to someone in Supervisor Richard Elías' office. I felt that Supervisor Elías' office might be a good setting for Andres to learn about the work performed by elected officials. Additionally he could pick up some first-hand information about the field of journalism from Supervisor Elías' aide, Keith Bagwell, a former reporter for the *Arizona Daily Star*. Unfortunately, Supervisor Elías did not take a summer student that year; however, Andres did work for the County Administrator's Office and did get to meet Supervisor Elías.

After meeting Supervisor Elías, Andres approached him about an internship opportunity during the school year. Andres attended City High School where annual school-year internships are a requirement for graduation. Supervisor Elías gladly accepted Andres as his intern and Andres has been an active member of Supervisor Elías' office since. This summer Andres will work for Supervisor Elías through the summer youth program. This fall, he will head off to the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University, or possibly to Tufts University in Boston if an opening becomes available there. He is number one on Tufts' wait list.

Regardless of which school he attends, Andres will have a full scholarship courtesy of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

which covers all unmet costs for outstanding minority students through the Gates Millennium Scholars program. The scholarship is renewable each year as long as recipients make satisfactory academic progress.

In addition to his employment, internship experiences and outstanding grades, Andres has also served on a number of youth boards and commissions, including his role as chair of the Governor's Youth Commission; Board Member of SharMoore Children's Productions; Executive Producer/Founder of Snap Back! TV; Board Member of Pan Left Productions; Community Organizer for PRO Neighborhoods; Chair, Substance Abuse Prevention Summit 2008 (Voices for Education); and Board Member, Every Voice In Action (to name a few)! He has also served as a student columnist for the *Tucson Citizen* and has received numerous awards and recognitions.

Andres took three years to complete high school; he graduated just two weeks after his seventeenth birthday. Many adults have urged him to relax and to be a kid for a while. Many have told him not to be so anxious to grow up. But these words of advice have fallen on deaf ears. Andres is driven. He is determined to continue his civic work and move on to higher education; he is determined to learn more and do more.

Andres was a speaker at his high school graduation. His self assurance and poise were far beyond that of a seventeen year old. His delivery was flawless and his message was inspirational. We in Community Relations wish him well and all the best. We will always have warm feelings about Andres, and years from now when he is making or reporting the national news, we will say "I knew Andres Cano when..."

Conveyance Back to School

by John Munden

Conveyance Division employees Carl Armbruster, Utility Maintenance Worker II, and Joseph Siva, Administrative Support Specialist, volunteered to participate in Career Day at Wright Elementary School on May 14.

Carl and Joseph went back to elementary school to educate fourth and fifth graders about the public sewer system and the types of jobs PCRWRD employees perform. "The students really enjoyed the technology we use on the CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) trucks. One student asked if we named our camera Wall-E," said Joseph.



Joseph Siva (picture standing in front) at Career Day with Wright Elementary School students

When asked by a fifth grader what the most exciting part of his job was, Carl replied, "The best part of our job is coming out to events like this and getting the chance to educate you."

This is the fourth Career Day event at area elementary schools that our CCTV crew has participated in the past three years. In addition to Wright Elementary School, the CCTV crew has also participated in Career Day at Roadrunner Elementary School. Participating in Career Day is one way the Conveyance Division demonstrates its involvement to the community.

E-RAP on the Spot Awards

by Thom Nielsen

Listed below are RWRD employees nominated for the E-RAP, (Employee Recognition and Appreciation Program) "On the Spot" awards. The intent of the "On the Spot" awards is to acknowledge good work performed by RWRD employees in the areas of Customer Service, Leadership, Creative Thinking, Problem Solving, Fiscal Responsibility and Process Improvement. If the contribution of the employee does not fit into any of the categories listed above, the nominator may create a category of his/her own. There are no restrictions placed on who can nominate whom.

Anna Chavarria, Administrative Specialist in the Employee Services section, was nominated by Luellen Lynch, Permit and Regulatory Compliance Coordinator, for Outstanding Customer Service. Luellen was preparing materials to conduct an employee annual appraisal and performance plan and needed information from the Employee Services section. Anna exceeded Luellen's request by providing the necessary documents as well as supporting information. By so doing, Anna saved Luellen a great deal of time and effort. Anna's strong work ethic and professionalism do not go unnoticed!

Jeff Graunke, Principal Operator in the Treatment Division, was nominated by Alex Greenwood at Outlying Facilities for Customer Service, Creative Thinking and Process Improvement. Jeff recently stepped down as an E-RAP board member. He was invaluable to our team and will be greatly missed. Thank you so much for everything you've done. Jeff has a way of making things easy and fun!

Ernie Luna, Wastewater Conveyance System Monitor, was nominated by RWRD Engineer Dennis Froehlich, for Outstanding Customer Service and Problem Solving. I received an email on May

22, from Mr. Brent Hayworth thanking RWRD for addressing the sewer odors in the Shannon and River area, and along the Rillito River Path. Mr. Hayworth's email said, "The smell has been great here – thanks for all you did." Ernie was instrumental in assessing and monitoring the problem and mitigating the odors.

Roy Montoya, Engineering Construction Permits Manager, was nominated by Francisco Duchicela, Civil Engineer, for Leadership, Creative Thinking and Problem Solving. PCRWRD almost had to approve a new sewer system extension that would have cost \$500,000 and potentially impact an aged 36" sewer line and existing manhole. Roy asked the simple question no one did. "What is wrong with using the existing connection to the sewer?" He immediately put together a plan that involved using his extensive construction experience. Roy made it work using common sense and logic. This saved the client \$500,000 and PCRWRD the danger of a costly sewer failure under a very busy major street that is currently under construction.

Yvonne Suarez, Civil Engineering Assistant, was nominated by Francisco Duchicela, Civil Engineer, for Leadership and Teamwork. Yvonne works with the Construction Permit group which is experiencing process improvements. Some staff members have been temporarily relocated to Deputy Director Eric Wieduwilt's office. Despite less staff, Yvonne is not only handling her own work effectively, but has taken on additional work. She is diligently training two new staff members and is carrying these additional duties in the most professional and effective manner. We are very pleased at how quickly and effectively she has stepped in and provided seamless customer service.

How to Live Healthier Longer

submitted by: Cecilia Vindiola

source: Pima County Employee Wellness

We can learn many lessons about aging from centenarians, and people who have lived beyond 100 years. This population has successfully avoided or markedly delayed diseases normally associated with aging, like Alzheimer's, cancer, heart disease and stroke. So how can we dip into that fountain of youth?

Maintain a Positive Attitude. Centenarians rarely consider their age a limitation: How a person feels about aging is key to his/her ability to thrive. As we age, we can take advantage of opportunities and possibilities that may not have been available to us previously.

Take Advantage of Your Genes. The vast majority of people have genes that allow them to live to at least 85 years old. Take advantage of these genes; don't thwart them. Good health practices will help you make up for at least some of the genetic differences between you and centenarians, and maximize the disease-free portion of your life.

Exercise. With advanced age, resistance training becomes

increasingly important for maintaining strength and muscle. Increased muscle tissue burns fat more efficiently, reduces your heart disease risk, and markedly enhances a sense of well-being.

Investigate New Challenges. Keep your mind active with new and different activities to exercise different parts of your brain. Take advantage of opportunities and possibilities that may have not been available to you previously, such as a second career, volunteer activities, musical instruction, writing, or travel.

Practice Good Nutrition. Emphasize fruits and vegetables in your diet, and minimize meat, saturated and hydrogenated fats, and sweets. Eat moderately in order to avoid obesity.

De-stress Often. Centenarians naturally shed psychological stress. Humor, meditation, Tai Chi, exercise, and optimism are some techniques that can help to manage stress.

For more healthy tips, please check out the Employee Wellness website, at www.pima.gov/hr/health.

Employee Birthdays

by Maggie Alvarez

Listed below are employees who have birthdays for the month of July:

Lisa Abel Ben-Dror, Richard Aros, Joseph Bailey, John Baker, Charles Bard, Fred Bass, Karen Beck, Dewey Cooper, Ben Changkakoti, Kathy Chavez, Eduardo Daniel, Marvin Fairbanks, Matthew Foy, Dennis Froehlich, Frank Gall, Karin Garrison, Wendy Gort, Cameron Grott, Timothy Harmon, Todd Mailloux, Edward Martinez, Terence McDonald, Robert Mitchell, Jose Mondragon, Weylin Moore, Larry Murguia, Longinus Onyiriogwu, Noel Ortiz, Rachael Ortiz, Jack Parker, Steve Portugal, Henry Rodriguez III, Dean Romero, Melaney Seacat, John Sherlock, Stephanie Siva, Paul Strasser, Richard Sullivan Jr., Ray Teague, Valerie Torres, Michael Uralowich, Steven Valencia, John Valero, Priscilla Vasquez, Kenneth Weber

Superintendent Job Titles Change

by Laura Hagen Fairbanks

RWRD had four superintendents: James Doyle, Ina Road WRF; Frank Gall, Sub-Regional Facilities; John Sherlock, Roger Road WRF; and Jack Van Riper, Plant Services. Today, these four gentlemen are still employed by RWRD, but are bearing a new title: Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager.

Deputy Director Jackson Jenkins explained the change in title. "We have Wastewater Treatment Plant Assistant Managers, Wastewater Treatment Plant Maintenance Assistant Managers and other assistant manager titles. To keep things consistent, we changed the Superintendent title to Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager." Jackson noted that only the titles changed. Job responsibilities, job grade, and salaries remain the same.

Comings and Goings

by Daniel Brown

New Hires

Armando Eugenio Bernal
Youth Crew Leader
Roger Road WRF
Antonio Garcia
Youth Crew Leader
Roger Road WRF

Promotion

David Major
Senior WWTP Operator
Ina Road WRF

Retirements

None

Deadline for Pipeline Submission

Please submit your stories for the July edition to Lorraine.Simon@wrm.pima.gov, by Monday, July 6. If you will be submitting a photo, please send as a separate .jpg attachment.

Correction

In the May edition of the *Pipeline*, it was reported that the new Avra Valley expansion will provide a higher quality effluent through nutrient removal. The existing 1.2/2.2 mgd Avra Valley treatment trains achieve nutrient removal; therefore the expansion will not improve the effluent quality. However, the expansion is a newer and more modern facility with additional process control and automation which should help better ensure high quality effluent over the long-term.

